IN THE CLOWN COUNTRY

A Story from a New Fairy Book, "Dot and Tot of Merryland."

[Mr. L. Frank Baum, who has written several very acceptable books for children, and has won recognition as an author of fairy tales, has lately produced a story for little children, entitled "Dot and Tot of Merryland." Dot and Tot, who are characteristic American children, find themselves helplessly adrift in a boat, and passing through a dark tunnel concealed in the face of a cliff come unexpectedly upon the entrance to the Seven Valleys of Merryland, guarded by a remarkable personage called The Watchdog of Merryland. Escaping this amiable creature the children drift down the river and pass through each of the Seven Valleys, finding on the way a succession of marvels. By permission of the publishers, George M. Hill Co., of Chicago, the Journal here produces a chapter from the book.]

Flippityflop's house proved to be one big room, built under the platform, and lighted by a soft glow from hidden electric lamps. The walls were covered with bright yellow silk hangings and on the floor was a crimson carpet. All around the sides were wide benches with soft cushions of purple velvet, and near the middle of the room was a small table of blue and silver. On the walls Dot noticed several gaudily colored pictures of Clowns, and when Flippityflop saw the children looking at these pictures he said:

"Those are portraits of my father and grandfather and great-grandfather. They were all Princes of this Valley of Merryland, as well as good men and clever Clowns. Therefore I am proud of them."

"They look very jolly," said Dot.

"They were jolly, and proved a comfort to thousands of children. But you must be hungry, and I trust you will allow me to offer you some dinner. What will you have?"

"What you got?" inquired Tot.

"Well, I have in my cupboard some fried gold fish, boiled buttercups and pickled shoelaces," he answered.

"Don't want any," said Tot.

"These seem rather foolish things to eat," remarked Dot.

"Of course, they are foolish things," agreed Flippityflop, cheerfully. "Everything we do here is foolish. You certainly can't expect wisdom in a country of Clowns."

"Course not," said Tot.

"If you'll send the boat for our basket, I think we will prefer to eat the things we brought with us," declared Dot.

"Certainly!" answered the Prince, and immediately sticking his head through the trap-door, he asked a Clown who stood outside to fetch the basket.

It came in a remarkably short time, and then Flippityflop assisted Dot to lay the cloth on the blue and silver table, when the children proceeded to eat of the sandwiches, cake and apple tarts that remained in the basket.

"Wouldn't you like something to drink?" asked the Prince.

"I am rather thirsty," admitted Dot; "have you any milk?"

"No, we do not use milk in this valley," he answered. "But we have some excellent green paint, or, if you prefer it, I can give you a bottle of red mucilage."

"No, thank you," said Dot; "we couldn't drink those. Perhaps you will bring us some fresh water from the river."

"But the water is quite wet," exclaimed the Clown, "and is liable to make you damp. Surely you won't think of drinking it!"

"Oh, yes; we're accustomed to drinking water," said the girl.

So the water was sent for and Dot and Tot took long and refreshing drinks, al-

L. FRANK BAUM.

though their action alarmed Flippityflop, who urged them to eat a few handfuls of sawdust afterward to absorb the dampness.

"Do all the Clowns live in this valley?" asked the girl, when the table was cleared.

"Yes, all except those we send into the world to amuse the children," answered Flippityflop. "You see, we train them all very carefully, and every year one is selected to go into the world."

"How do they get there?" asked the child.

"At the upper edge of our valley there is one place not so steep as the rest. The Clown who is leaving us climbs to this place and finds himself on the top of a mountain. So he makes himself into a ball, as he has been taught to do, and rolls down the mountain into the outside world, where he travels around until he finds a circus to join."

"Oh!" exclaimed Dot. "I've seen 'em—in circuses."

"To be sure; that's the proper place for Clowns. Do they make children laugh?"

"Sometimes," said the girl.

"When they do not," said Flippityflop, gravely, "they are imitation Clowns, and were never trained in this Valley of Merryland. The real Clowns are sure to make you laugh. But come, it is time our people were gathering on the platforms for their evening practice. Would you like to watch them?"

"Yes, indeed!" cried Dot, joyfully; and Tot clapped his hands and echoed: "'Deed, yes!"

So Flippityflop lifted them through the hole to the top of the paneled platform, where they saw a strange and merry sight.

All the platforms on both sides of the street were now occupied by Clowns, who were performing in a most marvelous manner. The trees were full of electric lights, which shed brilliant rays over the scene and enabled the children to see everything distinctly.

"Come with me," said their friend, "and I will lead you through the street, that you may see what my brothers are doing."

They left the Prince's platform and came to the next, where three gayly dressed Clowns were bounding in the air and whirling around before they came down again. Every time they jumped they cried: "All right, Mr. Johnson!" in their shrill voices, and often one of them would fall on his head or back instead of landing on his feet. When this happened they were not hurt, for the platform was soft and yielding; so they sprang up at once and tried it over again, laughing at their own mishaps.

FLIPPITY FLOP, THE GUIDE.

At the next platform were some juggling Clowns. One of these placed a light ladder on his shoulders, and another ran up it and stood upon his head on the top round.

In another place the Clowns threw small silver balls into the air, one after the other, and then caught them cleverly as they came down.

Near the end of the street a Clown, dressed in a costume of scarlet with green spots upon it, and wearing a white pointed cap upon his head, was singing a comic song. They stopped to listen while he sang as follows:

A goat to a barber went one day;
"Just trim my beard," the goat did say,
"And cut my hair in a stylish way"—
Sing shivvy, shovvy, shavey!
The barber then began to snip,
But soon he let the scissors slip,
And cut the goat upon his lip—
Sing shivvy, shovvy, shavey!

Then Mr. Goat, with angry bleat,
Gave one big jump from out his seat,
And knocked the barber off his feet—
Sing shivvy, shovvy, shavey!
"Enough!" he cried, "I'll have you know,
If barbers treat their patrons so,
I'll just allow my beard to grow!"
Sing shivvy, shovvy, shavey!

After each verse another Clown cracked a long whip at the singer, which made him leap into the air and screw his face up in such a comical way that Dot and Tot were greatly amused, and applauded him rapturously.

Just across the street was another singing Clown; but this one was dressed in a curious costume, that was all white on one side of his body and all red on the other side. This fellow balanced the point of his cap upon the end of his nose, and then, making a bow, sang the following song:

"Little Tommy Harris
Made a trip to Paris!
There he went within a tent,
Saw a convex firmament;
Then he peered within a booth,
Saw a shark without a tooth,
Heard a dumb man sing and chant,
Saw a crimson elephant.
Next he walked into a street,
Saw a lamp-post drink and eat,
Heard a turtle loudly roar,
Saw a rainbow through a door.
Then a man without a leg
Danced upon a horse's egg.
Then a steeple on a dome
Cried, 'My boy, you'd best go home.'
But as Tommy homeward sped,
He awoke—and was in bed!
Little Tommy Harris
Never went to Paris!"

This singer had so droll an expression on his face that Tot yelled with rapture, and Dot found herself laughing heartily. Indeed, the whole performance was a delight to the children, and they were sorry when a bell rang and put a stop to the antics of the Clowns.

At once they all dived into the trapdoors of their platforms, and Flippityflop said they had gone to bed and would not appear again until the next morning.

The children were somewhat tired by the adventures of the day, so when Flippityflop helped them to gain the room under his platform, they crept to the soft-cushioned benches that lined the walls and lay down. In less than a minute Dot and Tot were fast asleep, curled up side by side, with their arms entwined.

Next morning they were awakened by the strains of sweet music. Dot at once sat up and asked:

"What is that?"

"That is my alarm clock," answered Prince Flippityflop, who had been reclining upon a bench at the other side of the room. "It tells me when it is time to get up."

"It's a queer alarm clock," said the girl.

"But a very good one," returned the Clown. "It is really a big music box under the bench, which starts playing every morning at 7 o'clock. So, instead of being awakened by a rattling and clanging of bell, such as most alarm clocks make, I open my eyes with a sensation of pleasure, and get up feeling jolly and content."

"I think it's a lovely clock," said Tot.

"Won't you join me at breakfast?" asked the Prince; "I'm going to have a dish of scrambled egg-shells and a few fried buttons. The egg-shells make our complexions white and chalky, and we are very fond of them."

"I prefer to eat something from our basket," replied the girl. "But Tot may eat the egg-shells and buttons, if he wants them."

"Don't want 'em! cried Tot. "Want bread and butter."

"Well, I declare!" said the Clown; "what peculiar tastes you children have!"

But he allowed them to breakfast from their own stock of food, and when the meal was finished Dot said:

"We must be going now; but first I wish to thank you for the pleasant time we have had in your valley. We enjoyed the Clowns very much indeed."

"Nice Clowns," declared Tot, with emphasis.

"I'm sorry to have you go," said Flippityflop; "but I suppose you cannot stay here always, especially as you are going to visit our Queen."

Then he carried the big basket down to the boat for them, and all the Clowns came to the river bank in a long procession, to bid them good-bye.

After they were seated in the boat and had begun to float out into the river again, the Clowns started singing a comic song, in one big chorus, as a farewell entertainment.

Dot and Tot laughed and waved their handkerchiefs at the jolly fellows until the archway leading into the next valley was reached, and as the shadow of the rocks fell upon them and shut out their view of the First Valley of Merryland, they

ANOTHER SINGING CLOWN.

sighed and turned wonderingly to face whatever adventures might lie before them.

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From in the Heart of Mary.

Mother of Sorrows, I—
But my Babe is on my breast;
He resteth quiet there
Who bringeth the weary rest;
He lieth calm and still
Who bringeth the troubled peace,
Who openeth prison doors
And giveth the sad release;
For there reacheth Him yet no sound,
No echo of cry or moan;
To-day, little Son, little Son,
To-day Thou art all my own. • • •

Mother of Sorrows, I—
And the sword shall pierce my heart;
But to-day I hold Him close
From the cruel world apart.
It waits with smiting and gibes,
With scourging and hatred and scorn,
With hyssop and wormwood and gall,
The cross and the crown of thorn;
The nations shall watch Him die,
Lifted up on the tree;
But to-day, little Son, little Son,
To-day Thou are safe with me.

—Annie Johnson Flint, in the December Atlantic.

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Fairy Tales of Science

V.

BIRD MIGRATION,

By HERBERT MAXWELL, Bart., M. P.

Early one morning last autumn the attendant charged with the duty of cleaning out the cars of the great wheel at Earl's Court discovered that a certain tramp had taken up lodging for the night in one of the highest of them. He perceived at once that this was no ordinary tramp; the dress of the wanderer was evidence of it; it was beautifully fitted, of the tint known to deer-stalkers as "Lovat mixture"—a delicate ashen green. His boots were brown and carefully varnished, but the most remarkable part of his attire was the cap, which was brilliant flame-color, turned up with black velvet. Altogether an exceptionally dandy tramp.

Further inquiry revealed other differences between this and the ordinary tramp. All British tramps have their rounds; generally limited to the United Kingdom, or a certain portion thereof. You don't meet tramps on the channel steamers nor on the Atlantic liners; country lanes, high roads or the thoroughfares of great towns are the best places to look for them by day; and by night—well, you had better not look for them at all, unless in the admirably managed Rowton houses. This tramp, like others, had his special round, but it covered several thousands of miles over land and sea, which he was in the habit of traversing twice a year, to and fro.

THE FAIRY "TRAMP."

His name was Regulus, the kinglet—Regulus cristatus in full. I have forgot to mention one remarkable peculiarity, that of his stature. He measured less than four inches in height. This, taken in conjunction with his attire of green and gold, convinced the attendant that here at last was a veritable fairy—nay, named Regulus, was he not king of the fairies?

If we drop romance and come to sober science have we not in this incident something more marvelous than any fairy tale? Night draws her curtain over the vast city; the crowd disperses from the pleasure grounds at Earl's Court; the great wheel makes its last revolution and is still. London is asleep or as near asleep as it can get. At all events its feathered population are fast asleep, the sparrows on the housetops, the pigeons on the clock tower, the thrushes in the park. Yet far overhead, under the stooping clouds, there flowers a stream of life, fowls of the air, great and small. If you point your glass at the moon on a clear October night you may chance to see myriads of tiny specks moving southward. The great autumn migration is going on.

The little gold crest wren—tiniest of all British birds—had been an atom in this mighty movement. Lured down from its lofty course by the light left burning in one of the cars, it lost its citizenship in the great host of which it had been a unit. Had it held on with the others, it might have dashed out its diminutive life against the lantern of some lighthouse; for so tens of thousands of its kindred and of other and greater birds sacrifice themselves, profiting by experience no more than do moths at a candle. Or it might have escaped all the perils of travel—the hostile hordes of gulls which hover off the coast, pouncing on the wing-weary, hungry travelers as they land—the diligent bird catchers who know so well to spread their snares upon immemorial resting places like our Sussex downs or Heligoland—through all these the little fairy king might have winged a way and spent a happy Christmas among the chestnut woods of the Valtelline or oleanders of Granada, to return to the domestic duties in England when the primroses began to blow. It was fated otherwise. This minute morsel of flesh and feathers lost its way in the busiest of human hives, to remind us that with all our devices of science and industry some of the humblest creatures and the smallest possess faculties which we are unable to realize or define.

The seasonal migration of birds has received much careful attention of late years. Certain well-defined arrivals and departures have been landmarks in the year from the earliest recorded times; "the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming," but the general character of the movement of nearly all species of British birds was not suspected until systematic observations, conducted over a number of seasons at the lighthouses on the British and Irish coasts, revealed the fact that even some of our most constant feathered fellow-citizens dispatched innumerable contingents to the south on the approach of winter. The lighthouse keepers are kept supplied with forms by a committee of the British Association, the men are diligent in filling them up, noting the flocks revealed to them at night by the flare of the light, registering the dates of movement, and recording the mortality among birds flying against the lantern. That the species of these last may be verified the wings of victims are forwarded with the reports. From the mass of information thus accumulated year by year it may be pronounced that game birds are almost absolutely stationary, although partridge has been recorded from Heligoland; so probably may the house sparrow, demoralized by long acquaintance with the vices of town life; but rooks, jays, blackbirds, thrushes, chaffinches, even the confiding robin and the contented little brown wren pass in literally countless numbers from one region to another, moved by a latent but irresistible impulse.

THE TRAVELS OF THE KNOT.

An extreme instance of this annual migration may be found in the knot (Tringa canutus), a two-penny half-penny little wader about the size of a common snipe. Breeding so far to the north that no collection in the world contains a specimen of its egg, the knots leave the Arctic circle in the autumn, and move in vast multitudes through Europe, Asia and America, not shunning the British isles, and continue their leisurely journey to such prodigious limits that the advanced guard, before it has turned north again, has occupied China, Surinam, Brazil, South Africa and the Australasian group.

It is natural to ask why such an enormous journey should be undertaken, seeing that this little bird, gifted with powers of flight incomparably inferior to the swallow, is just as punctual in traversing thousands of miles as the swallow is in traveling hundreds.

The answer is still in a nebulous phase, but modern research seems to be clearing away some of the mists. Cold is not the direct agent in regulating these mysterious movements, for birds belonging to the northern and temperate zones have marvelous powers of resisting cold, and a Spanish winter, for example, is often far more severe than an Irish one. But cold may be accounted the indirect cause of the southward autumnal migration, which brings some birds to the British isles and expels others. Cold affects the food supply, destroying the insects upon which soft-billed birds depend, and burying in snow the seeds which supply the others.

The late Herr Gatke for more than fifty years kept accurate observation of the passage of birds in his island home of Heligoland. His notes are of incalculable value to ornithologists, throwing, as they do, instructive light on the probable cause of migration. Thus, the first birds to begin moving south are young starlings, in the last ten days of June. It were wonderful enough that old birds, of habits normally diurnal, should find their way through the darkness by a route which they had traveled before; but that young birds, newly fledged, even if guided, as is possible, by a few experienced individuals, should steer straight to unknown winter haunts, transcends anything that we can understand at present. Yet with most species it seems to be the habit to send off the young birds first. The cuckoo is a notable exception. Having no domestic duties the old cuckoos make a start as soon as caterpillars begin to get scarce, and put in an appearance in Heligoland about the middle of July, to be followed by the young flight a month or six weeks later.

PROBLEMS OF MIGRATION.

Two questions suggest themselves—why is bird migration chiefly conducted during the night? and why do the flocks move at such great heights as they are known to do? To the second question no satisfactory answer can be offered at present. It might be conceivable, if the movement took place in daylight, that ground-loving birds like robins, thrushes, and other common objects of the lawn might ascend hundreds of feet in order to obtain a "bird's-eye view" of the landscape. But migrant birds fly chiefly in the darkness, out of which they descend, many of them to their destruction, when attracted by strong lights. Possibly they are obeying an instinct which warns them against hawks, owls and gulls, chiefly to be encountered in the lower strata of atmosphere, and in this also is to be found the probable explanation why daylight birds choose the night time for their journeys.

But then, it may be asked, why don't birds remain and breed in the regions where food is always to be found? There are always plenty of lapwings in England in winter, and they find abundant provender; why should English-bred lapwings take the trouble to travel all the way to the Danube or Morocco, in order to have their places taken by flights bred in Scandinavia and Iceland? That brings us to one of the most suggestive aspects of the phenomenon of bird migration. Every species of bird in the northern hemisphere, except the sedentary game fowls, grouse, pheasant, partridge, and the like—move to the northern limit of their annual migration to nest. The limit for the nightingale is south of the Trent; for the knot, as has been shown, it is beyond where man can penetrate, or has as yet penetrated. Take that characteristic in conjunction with the notorious and invincible impulse of every bird to return to its birthplace to rest, and you will incline to the conclusion that bird life had its origin in high latitudes. Adopt that conclusion, and you will be tempted a little further. You will not dismiss with an incredulous smile the opinion of those who perceive in the polar circle the cradle of terrestrial life. If the earth, as there is reason to suppose, vast ages ago were a mass of incandescent matter, it would be at the poles where it would first cool down—at the poles where an endurable climate would first prevail. A tropical climate at first, of which there is abundant evidence in the fossil plants of Franz Josef land and Spitzbergen, where, if you penetrate the frozen surface layers, you come upon rocks yielding remains of tree ferns and giant mares-tails—plants that could only exist in a hot, steaming atmosphere. As the cooling process went on, the winter cold about the poles forced these tropical growths into a zone which gradually parted with enough heat to receive them. With the plants moved the animals, further and further towards the equator as the temperature permitted the advance, and in succession behind the tropical zone, the subtropical, temperate, subarctic and arctic regions developed in the slow succession of ages. But the birds have never forgotten their original home. Year by year they press as far northward as they can find room, as if determined that their offspring should know their true birthland. Perhaps Tennyson, alert and true as he was in observing nature, was not aware of the full significance of the lines in the Princess:

O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying south,
Fly to her and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her what I tell to thee.

O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North.

Next Week:

"History Told by Postage Stamps," by Hugh Richardson, M. A.

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"ALL RIGHT, MR. JOHNSON."

ROMAN NUMERALS IN BUSINESS.

Man Who Used Them Became Overwhelmed in Debt.

From "Captain Bluitt."

"There is another thing Rufus learned from Cap'n Bluitt hardly less significant than navigation, and that is what Cap'n Bluitt calls the use of the Roman numerals. I don't pretend to know much about it myself, but Rufus's mind has a quick grasp of such matters, and he tells me they used to use letters of the alphabet instead of figgers in counting; thus IV will stand for 4, and so forth, just like on a clock. Rufus was so fascinated by the system that he began to keep his accounts with the cap'n for the butter and eggs and fruit and vegetables he sold down here to Mr. Shoemaker's store in the Roman numerals, and it was his delight to use them. But he has given up the practice now, at Cap'n Bluitt's earnest personal request."

"Why?" asked Walter.

"Because the first month, after Rufus began to figger that way he went to the cap'n to settle up and it appeared from the report that Rufus owed Cap'n Bluitt a sum of money ranging somewheres near to four hundred thousan dollars or thereabouts and upwards and Rufus he said to Cap'n Bluitt, "I don't see how that can be when I only sold eight bushels of potatoes and a few tomats and four pounds of butter and a few stewing apples and anyhow," said Rufus to Cap'n Bluitt, "it is difficult for me to know how I am ever going to pay you four hundred thousand dollars and upwards when my wages is but eight dollars a week with milk and eggs and kindling wood thrown in." Whereupon Cap'n Bluitt kindly proceeded to overhaul Rufus's monthly report and ere long discovered that the mistake was caused by the fact that Rufus misunderstood the cap'n when he explained to him the system of Roman numerals, for Rufus misunderstood him to say that M stood for 5, whereas really V stands for 5 and M stands for 1,000 and so on and other letters mixed the same way through misapprehension or Rufus not hearing right, with the result that the money owed by Rufus to Cap'n Bluitt for the month's transtactions, instead of running far up to a staggering sum of hundreds of thousands and upwards was readily reduced by accurate arithmetical proceedings to eleven dollars and thirty-eight cents. So Rufus dropped the Roman figgers and was glad to do it until he could get more practice because, he said Cap'n Bluitt might sometime feel queer and crooked and take advantage of him when the report spoke of millions and maybe seize our household furniture and put me and Rufus in jail for debt. So now Rufus keeps tally of the butter and pears by cutting notches in the studding post on the left-hand side as you go in the door of the cow-stable."